



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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CATCH LIMIT CHANGES FOR GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL

NOAA Fisheries has published a final rule implementing changes in the catch specifications for Gulf group king mackerel, as proposed by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. The rule is intended to enhance the economic and social benefits from the Gulf group king mackerel fisheries while rebuilding the stock.

The changes, **effective April 30, 2001**, include:

Revision of the commercial trip limit for Gulf group king mackerel in the Atlantic subzone of the Eastern Zone (Miami-Dade through Volusia Counties, Florida). The trip limit would increase from 50 to 75 fish on February 1, if 75 percent of the annual quota has not been taken. The commercial fishery in this subzone has not met its quota for Gulf group king mackerel in eight of the last ten years. The South Atlantic Council believes that a more flexible trip limit schedule will allow fishers a greater opportunity to meet their quota, while maintaining economic stability in the fishery for the majority of the season.

Establishment of a total allowable catch (TAC) for Gulf group king mackerel at 10.2 million pounds (MP). The TAC is a slight reduction from the existing 10.6 MP TAC. This reduction is necessary to restrain fishing mortality below the threshold level. The Gulf Council believes this TAC will allow continued rebuilding of the Gulf group king mackerel stock while minimizing the social and economic impacts from a TAC reduction.

Establishment of a 2-fish per person per day bag limit on Gulf group king mackerel for the captains and crews of for-hire vessels. Given that the stock of Gulf group king mackerel continues to improve, and because the recreational sector apparently is now maintaining harvest within its allocation, the Gulf Council believes that it is unnecessary to continue constraining the recreational harvest through the use of a zero-fish bag limit of Gulf group king mackerel for captains and crews of for-hire vessels.

NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Department of Commerce.